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The Atonement

A HISTORICAL AND
THEOLOGICAL
STUDY

BY CANON DYSON HAGUE

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
GENERAL SYNOD, ARCHIVES

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This was originally prepared by request of the Huron College Alumni, and read before them at the Synod meeting in June, 1911, and afterwards before an assembly of the Wycliffe College Alumni clergy in Toronto, October, 1911. The following are the chief works that have been studied in the preparation of this little work: Hodge; Dale; West; Stalker; Crawford, on the Atonement; Denney, on the Death of Christ; Denney, Atonement and the Modern Mind; Van Dyke's Gospel for a World of Sin; Campbell Morgan, The Bible and the Cross (in the Record of the Christian Work, 1909); Moberley, The Atonement and Personality; Atonement, by three Chicago Professors; Sabatier, on the Atonement; Clow, The Cross and Christian Experience; Cristus Crucifixus, Simpson; The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, a Symposium; Champion, The Living Atonement; Lux Mundi (The Atonement, by the Rev. and Hon. Arthur Lyttleton); Armour, Atonement and Law; At-one-ment or Reconciliation with God, Workman; Hodge, Systematic Theology; Cunningham, Historical Theology; Van Oosterzee, Christian Dogmatics; Ritschl, The Ritschlian Theology, by Orr and Garvie; and that masterpiece, Cur Deus Homo, by Anselm.

The Atonement.

We purpose to deal with this great subject from four viewpoints :—

- 1st. The Scriptural.
- 2nd. The Historical.
- 3rd. The Anglican.
- 4th. The Practical.

The importance of the subject is obvious. The Atonement is Christianity in epitome. It is the heart of Christianity as a system ; it is the differentia of the Christian religion. For Christianity is more than a revelation ; it is more than an ethic. Christianity is uniquely a religion of redemption. At the outset we take the ground that no one can clearly apprehend this great theme who is not prepared to take Scripture as it stands, and to treat it as the final and authoritative source of knowledge, and the test of every theory. Any statement of the Atonement, to completely satisfy the truly intelligent Christian, must not antagonize any of the Biblical viewpoints. And, further ; to fairly approach the subject, one must receive with a certain degree of reservation the somewhat exaggerated representations of what some modern writers conceive to be the views of orthodoxy. What present-day theologian, for instance, in systematizing the theory of the vicarious Atonement, has ever expressed the thought of an obstinate punisher venting his vengeance on an innocent substitute, and consenting, therefore, to treat the wicked untruly and unrighteously, as if they were what they are not ; or ever said that Christ died because God was insulted and must punish somebody ; or ever set forth the Atonement as the propitiation of an angry monarch—God, taking

delight in executing vengeance on sin ; or ever exhibited God as a creature more hard-hearted and less willing to forgive than His creatures ; or proclaimed that God let off the rogue, while He tortured the innocent ; or talked of the fury of God being appeased by the interposition of Jesus Christ ? (Moberley, 283-342 ; Van Dyke, 46-184 ; Clow, 159, etc.). And who, but a Unitarian like Martineau would ever dream of asking how the alleged immorality of letting off the sinner is mended by the added crime of penally crushing the sinless ; or what we could think of a Judge who should discharge the felons from the prisons of a city because some noble and generous citizen offered himself to the executioner, instead ? (Dale, p. 394.) No ! We cannot deduce Scriptural views of the Atonement from non-Biblical conceptions of the Person of Christ ; and these and all such travesties of the truth are simply the misrepresentations of that revamped Socinianism, which is so widely leavening the theology of many of the outstanding thought-leaders of to-day in German, British, and American theology. It is only, therefore, as we approach with a humble heart and an open spiritual mind, that we can expect to grasp a subject which the master minds of the ages have acknowledged to be the magnum mysterium of revelation.

1. The Atonement from the Scriptural Viewpoint.

As the Atonement is exclusively a matter of Revelation, and we have absolutely no means of information on the subject apart from the Holy Scriptures, we will approach it first from the Scriptural viewpoint.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

As we open the Bible and listen to what the Lord saith, we are struck with the fact that in the Old Testament system, without an atoning sacrifice there could be no access for sinful men into the presence of the Holy God. The heart and centre of the divinely revealed religious system of God's ancient people was that, without a propitiatory sacrifice, there could be no acceptable approach to God. There must be acceptance before there is worship; there must be atonement before there is acceptance. This atonement consisted in the shedding of blood. The blood-shedding was the effusion of life; for the life of the flesh is in the blood—a dictum which the modern science of physiology abundantly confirms (Lev. 17 : 11-14). The blood shed was the blood of a victim which was to be ceremonially blemishless (Ex. 12 : 5 ; 1 Pet. 1 : 19) ; and the victim that was slain was a vicarious or substitutionary representative of the worshipper (Lev. 1 : 4 ; 3 : 2, 8, 13 ; 4 : 4-15-24-29 ; 16 : 21, etc). The death of the victim was an acknowledgment of the guilt of sin, and its exponent. In one word ; the whole system was designed to teach the holiness and righteousness of God, the sinfulness of men, and the guilt of sin ; and, above all, that it was God's will that forgiveness should be secured, not on account of any works of the sinner or anything that he could do, any act of repentance or exhibition of penitence, or performance of expiatory

or restitutionary works, but solely on account of the undeserved grace of God through the death of a victim guilty of no offence against the Divine law, whose shed blood represented the substitution of an innocent for a guilty life.* It is obvious that the whole system was transitory and imperfect, as the eighth chapter of Hebrews shows. Not because it was revolting as the modern mind objects; for God intended them thereby to learn how revolting sin was and how deserving of death; but because in its essence it was typical, and prophetic, and intended to familiarize God's people with the great idea of atonement, and at the same time to prepare for the sublime revelation of Him who was to come: "The despised and rejected of men Who was to be smitten of God and afflicted, Who was to be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, Whose soul was to be made an offering for sin" (Isa. 53 : 5, 8, 10, 12).

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

When we come to the New Testament we are struck with three things :

First.—The unique prominence given to the death of Christ in the four Gospels. This is unparalleled. It is without analogy, not only in Scripture, but in history, the most curious thing about it being that there was no precedent for it in the Old Testament (Dale, Atonement, p. 51). No particular value or benefit is attached to the death of anybody in the Old Testament ; nor is there the remotest trace of anybody's death having an expiatory or humanizing or regenerative effect. There were plenty of martyrs and national heroes in Hebrew history, and many of them were stoned and sawn asunder, were

*See Lux Mundi, p. 237. The idea, p. 232, that sacrifice is essentially the expression of unfallen love, is suggestive, but it would perhaps be better to use the word "also," instead of "essentially." See, also, the extremely suggestive treatment in Gibson's Mosaic Era, of the Ritual of the Altar, p. 146.

tortured and slain with the sword, but no Jewish writer attributes any ethical or regenerative importance to their decease.

Second.—It is evident to the impartial reader of the New Testament that the death of Christ was the object of His Incarnation. His Crucifixion was the main purport of His coming. His death was the reason of His life. His mission was mainly to die. Beyond thinking of death as the terminus or the inevitable climax of life, the average man rarely alludes to or thinks of death. In all biography it is expected as the inevitable. But with Christ, His death was *the* purpose for which He came down from heaven: "For this cause came I to this hour" (Jno. 12:27). From the outset of His career it was the overshadowing event. It was distinctly foreseen. It was voluntarily undergone, and in Mark 10:45, He says: "The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many." We are not in the habit of paying ransoms, and the metaphor nowadays is unfamiliar. But, to the Jew, ransom was an everyday custom. It was what was given in exchange for the life of the first-born. It was the price which every man paid for his life. It was the underlying thought of the Mosaic and prophetic writings (Lev. 25:25, 49; Num. 18:15; Ps. 49-7; Isa. 35:10; 51:11; 43:14; Ex. 13:13; 30:12, 16; 34:20; Hos. 13:14, etc., etc.), and so, when Christ made the statement, it was a concept which could be immediately grasped. He came to give His life a ransom, that through the shedding of His blood we might receive redemption, or emancipation, both from the guilt and from the power of sin.*

*The modernists endeavor to evacuate this saying of Christ of all meaning. The text, unfortunately, is stubborn, but the German mind is never at a loss for a theory; so it is asserted that they are indications that Peter has been Paulinized, so reluctant is the rationalizer to take Scripture as it stands, and to accept Christ's words in their obvious meaning, when they oppose his theological aversions.

Third.—The object of the death of Christ was the forgiveness of sins. The final cause of His manifestation was remission. It would be impossible to summarize all the teaching of the New Testament on this subject.**

It is clear, though, that, to our Saviour's thought, His cross and passion was not the incidental consequence of His opposition to the degraded religious standards of His day, and that He did not die as a martyr because death was preferable to apostasy. His death was the means whereby men should obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life (John 3:14, 16; Math. 26:28). The consentient testimony of the New Testament writers, both in the Acts and the Epistles, is that Christ died no accidental death, but suffered according to the will of God, His own volition, and the predictions of the prophets, and that His death was substitutionary, sacrificial, atoning, reconciling and redeeming (John 10:18; Acts 2:23; Rom. 3:25; 5:6, 9; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:15, 19, 21; Heb. 9:14, 26, etc., etc.). In proof, it will be sufficient to take the inspired testimony of the three outstanding writers, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Paul.

ST. PETER.

To St. Peter's mind, the death of Jesus was the central fact of revelation and the mystery, as well as the climax of Incarnation. The shedding of His blood was sacrificial; it was covenanting; it was sin-covering; it was redeeming; it was ransoming; it was the blood of the Immaculate Lamb, which emancipates from sin (1 Pet. 1:2, 11, 18, 19). In all His post-Pentecostal deliverances he magnifies the Crucifixion as a revelation of the enormity of human sin, never as

**Perhaps the completest summary is found in Crawford, who devotes 160 pages to the texts in the New Testament which speak of Christ's atoning death. Dale also gives a good summary, pp. 448-458.

a revelation of the Infinitude of the Divine Love (Dale p. 115). His death was not merely an example; it was substitutionary. It was the death of the sin-bearer. "Christ also suffered for us," "He bare our sins," meaning that He took their penalty and their consequence (Lev. 5 : 17; 24 : 16; Num. 9 : 13; 14 : 32, 34; Ezek. 18 : 19, 20). His death was the substitutionary, the vicarious work of the innocent on behalf of, in the place of, and instead of, the guilty (1 Peter 3 : 18).*

ST. JOHN.

According to St. John, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was propitiatory, substitutionary, purificatory. It was the Hilasmos; the objective ground for the remission of our sins.

The narrow and superficial treatment of modernism, which, if it does not deny the Johannine authorship, the four Gospels and the Revelation, at least insinuates that the death of Christ has no parallel place in the writings of St. John to that which it has in the writings of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the other New Testament authors, is entirely contradicted by the plain statements of the Word itself.

The glory of the world to come is the sacrificed Lamb. The glory of heaven is not the Risen or Ascended Lord, but the Lamb that was slaughtered (Rev. 5 : 6-12; 7 : 10; 21 : 23, etc.). The foremost figure in the Johannine Gospel is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, Who lifts the sin-burden by expiating it as the Sin-Bearer. The center of the Johannine evangel is not the teaching but the uplifted Christ, Whose death is to draw as a magnet the hearts of mankind, and Whose life as the Good Shepherd is laid down for the sheep.

*To interpret this as bearing them in sympathy (see Bushnell, quoted in Dale, p. 182, and The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, p. 43) is surely an evidence of the prejudice and bias of modernism.

No one who fairly faces the text could deny that the objective ground for the forgiveness of sins, in the mind of St. John, is the death of Christ, and that the most fundamental conception of sacrifice and expiation is found in the writings of him who wrote by the Spirit of God, "He is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2), and not for us only. "Hereby perceive we the love of God because He laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16). "Herein is love, etc." (1 John 4:16).

The propitiatory character of the blood, the substitutionary character of the atonement, and, above all, the expiating character of the work of Christ on Calvary, clearly is most indubitably set forth in the threefoldness of the historic, didactic, and prophetic writings of St. John.

ST. PAUL.

St. Paul became, in the Providence of God, the constructive genius of Christianity. His place in history, through the Spirit, was the explainer, the elucidator of the salient facts of Christianity, and especially of that one great subject which Christ left in a measure unexplained; His own death (Stalker's St. Paul, p. 13). That great subject, its cause, its meaning, its result, became the very fundamentum of his Gospel. It was the commencement, centre, and consummation of his theology. It was the elemental truth of his Creed. He began with it. It pervaded his life. He gloried in it to the last. The most preposterous and insane proposition that an Eastern fanaticism proclaimed was to him the inspiration of his intellectual and spiritual life. The sinner is dead, enslaved, guilty, and hopeless, without the atoning death of Jesus Christ. But Christ died for him, in his stead, became a curse for him, became sin for him, gave Himself for him, was an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for him, redeemed him, justified him, saved him from wrath, purchased him. His blood, reconciled him by His death, etc. To talk of Paul using the language he did as an accommo-

dition to Jewish prejudices, or to humor the adherents of a current theology, is not only, as Dale says, an insult to the understanding of the founders of the Jewish faith, it is an insult to the understanding of any man with sense to-day. Christ's death was a death for sin; Christ died for our sins; that is, on behalf of, instead of, our sins. There was something in sin that made His death a divine necessity. His death was a propitiatory, substitutory, sacrificial, vicarious death. Its object was to annul sin; to propitiate Divine Justice, a Righteousness; to ransom us and to reconcile us. Christ's death was conciliating, in that by it men are separated, and the curse and the slavery and liability to death, and the impossibility of returning to God, was overcome by the death of the Lamb Who was slaughtered as a victim and immolated as a sacrifice (1 Cor. 5 : 7).

To Paul, the life of the Christian lies in the death of Christ. All love, all regeneration, sanctification, all liberty, all joy, all power circle around the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, and did for us objectively something that man could never do, and Who wrought that incredible, that impossible thing, salvation by the substitution of His life in the place of the guilty.*

SUMMARY.

To epitomize, then, the preachment of the Bible: The root of the idea of At-one-ment is estrangement. Sin, as iniquity and transgression, had the added element of egoistic rebellion and positive hostility to God (1 John 3 : 4 ; Rom. 5 : 15, 19). The horror of sin is that it wrenched the race from God. It dashed God from His throne and placed self thereupon. It crashed into a harmonized uni-

*The reader will find in Dale and Denney a complete summary of the New Testament treatment of the subject—Dale on the Testimony of St. Peter, St. John, St. James and St. Paul, to the fact of the Atonement, is almost exhaustive.

verse. It reversed the relationship of man and God. Its blight and its passion have alienated mankind, enslaved it, condemned it, doomed it to death, exposed it to wrath. The sacrifice of the cross is the explanation of the enormity of sin, and the measure of the love of the redeeming Trinity. It is only ignorance that says God loves because Christ died. Christ died because God loves. Propitiation does not awaken love. Love provides expiation. To cancel the curse, to lift the ban, to inoculate the antitoxin of grace, to regain life, to purchase pardon, to ransom the enslaved, to defeat Satan's work; in one word, to reconcile and restore a lost race; for this, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Son of Man, came into this world and offered up His Divine Human Person, Body and Soul.

His death upon the cross, both as a substitute, and as the federal representative of humanity, voluntary, altruistic, vicarious, sinless, sacrificial, purposed not accidental, from the standpoint of humanity unconscionably brutal, but from the standpoint of love indescribably glorious, not only satisfied all the demands of the divine righteousness, but offered the most powerful incentive to repentance, morality, and self-sacrifice. The Scripture in its completeness thus sets forth the substance of the two great theories, the moral and the vicarious, and we find in the rotundity or allness of the Scriptural presentment no mere partial or antagonistic segments of truth, but the completeness of the spiritual, moral, altruistic and atoning aspects of the death of Christ.*

*Hodge, on the Atonement, pp. 292-320, and Workman, Atonement and Reconciliation with God, may be taken as representative of this one-sided and therefore unsatisfactory way of treating a great subject. The Socinian view that Christ's death was mainly, if not exclusively, to produce a reconciling influence upon the heart of mankind, which Workman espouses, is as narrow, if not narrower, and as partial as Hodge's advocacy of the theory that Christ died for the elect only.

Some critics are loud in their outcry against what they call the commercial language of equivalent, punishment, and substituted ransom. But the position taken and language used are not the position and language of theologians, however orthodox, or of theorists, however original. These are the divinely inspired declarations of the Holy Ghost, Who has deliberately chosen to set before us, in the language of the inspired writers, the nature and method of the divine plan of reconciliation. If we do not understand it, that ought not to trouble us very much, for we know nothing at all yet as we ought to know.

2. The Historical.

We propose to discuss this subject from the historical standpoint in four brief sections :

1. The Primitive.
2. The Medieval.
3. The Reformation.
4. The Modern.

I 1st. THE PRIMITIVE.

With regard to the writers and writings of the primitive church in the Ante Nicene and the Post Nicene era, it may be said, broadly speaking, that the Atonement is presented by them as a fact, with its saving and regenerative effects. The consciousness of the primitive church did not seem to be alive to the necessity of the formation of any particular theory of the Atonement. It follows the Apostle's Creed, which makes no reference whatever to the miraculous words or marvellous works of Jesus, but significantly passes by them all to focus the confession of the Church upon the great purpose and achievement of the Incarnation ; His suffering as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

As regards the writers of the post-apostolic age Clement of Rome, Origen, and Athanasius, may be referred to as outstanding exponents of the church's thought in the first four centuries. Of the first and third it may be said that they simply amplified the language of the New Testament. There is no trace of the attitude of the modernist, with its brilliant attempts to explain away the obvious. Their doctrine of the Atonement is entirely free, as has been said, from the incrusting difficulties of spurious explanation. There were no attempts at philosophy or sophistry, though, as was to be expected, there was more or less of the embroidery of the Oriental imagination and a plethora of metaphor. (Justin Martyr, Chrysostom, and Augustine, may be mentioned also here.)

Origen, following possibly Irenæus, is accredited with the theory that the Atonement was a ransom paid to Satan. This was the theory of Gregory of Nyssa, Leo Magnus, and Gregory the Great. It was a weird theory, involving some strange conclusions, and evoked the antagonism of Gregory Nazianzen and John of Damascus. (See Sabatier, p. 64; Moberley, p. 338; and Dale, pp. 273-278.)

2nd. THE MEDIEVAL.

As we pass into the medieval period (broadly speaking, from 500 to 1500), we find that, with one or two exceptions, the ransom-paid-to-the-devil hypothesis held sway. It was not a thinking age, and the imprisonment of the Bible meant the reign of ignorance.

In the eleventh century, Anselm appeared. He was an Italian by birth, a Norman by training, and Archbishop of Canterbury by office. Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* is probably the greatest work on the Atonement that has ever been written. The work is great because it contains great conceptions of God, and great conceptions of sin. Sin is not to render to God His due, and the sinner is bound to pay back the honor of which he has robbed God. It

is a debt we are obliged to pay, and failing to do it, we must die. As sin is debt, there are only two ways in which man can be righted with God: either by incurring no debt, or paying the debt. But this man cannot do, and herein comes the glory of the Gospel of the Atonement, securing at once the honor of God and the salvation of the sinners. No one *ought* to make satisfaction for the sin of man except man, and no one *can* make satisfaction except God Himself. He who makes the satisfaction for human sin must, therefore, be man and God; and so in wondrous love, the God-Man of His own accord offered to the Father what He could not have been compelled to lose, and paid for our sins what He did not owe for Himself.

The Anselmic conceptions of God, of sin, of man, and of the soul are so transcendent that they are altogether too strong and too high for this age. His theory seems fantastic, his reasoning preposterous to the modern mind. Yet, after all, Anselm has never been surpassed. His mind was filled with the august greatness of God, the just penalty of sin, the impossibility of human atonement; and the atoning work of Christ, because of the Person who did the deed, outweighed the sins of all mankind, and bound mankind to the suffering Son of God by bonds of love that eternity will not sever.

Anselm swayed his own and has swayed every succeeding age. The counter theories of Abelard and Duns Scotus (Moberley, p. 372; Dale, p. 285), in which the modern mind is much more interested, and with which it is much more sympathetic, may be regarded as the foregleams of modern Unitarianism.

III. THE REFORMATION.

When we pass to the Reformation era, we find that the Pauline-Augustinian presentment of the subject is almost universal. The reformers, Lutheran and Calvinistic, were practically agreed in representing

the death of Christ as an atoning death. Both the Lutheran and the Reformed systems of theology alike, the latter of course including all the Anglican reformers, held the forensic idea of the death of Christ, which is so obviously manifest in the Pauline, Petrine, and Johannine presentments of the truth.

Turretin, the most distinguished writer on the subject of the Atonement of the Reformation era; Mastricht, a half century later, and Hugo Grotius, the antagonist of Socinus (whose *Defensio fidei Catholicæ de satisfactione Christi* appeared in 1617); all of them, with non-essential divergences, held the sacrificial, representative, vicarious theory of the Atonement (Dale, pp. 290-297; Hodge, *Sys. Theol. II.*, 573-575).*

4th. THE MODERN.

As we pass into the modern world of theology, three outstanding names in the nineteenth century may be selected as the representatives of the so-called orthodox, and three as representative of the broader school of theology. The works of Crawford, of Edinburgh, of Dale, of Birmingham, and of Denney, of Glasgow, are probably the finest expositions of the subject from the Scriptural and spiritual standpoint. All of them try to set forth the doctrine of the Atonement in the language of the New Testament, and according to the mind of the inspired writers, and take their stand upon the vicarious, substitutionary character of the Atonement. Professor A. A. Hodge's work is also most able and most scholarly. It is the strongest thing ever written on the subject from the Calvinistic standpoint. Bushnell, the American; Jowett, the Anglican, and McLeod Campbell, the Scotchman,

*With regard to the death of Christ as the atoning death of the Son of God for the sons of men, all were unanimous. They disagreed with regard to the extent of the Atonement, and in what sense the sufferings of Christ were penal.

may be taken as representatives of the broader school.** All of them are inclined to select a few of the texts which they think favor their theory, and to minimize almost to the point of explaining away those statements of the Old Testament, and of the New, which emphasize the gravity of the guilt of sin and the necessity of sacrifice as the objective ground of its forgiveness. They all of them incline to represent the sufferings of Christ as sympathetic, rather than vicarious; and, with the Swedenborgians, make the Atonement to consist not in what Christ did or offered by dying in our stead, so much as what He accomplished for us in His reconciling love. The Atonement was the Incarnation. *That* was the revelation of God's love; and the sufferings of Christ were not a substitute for the penalty of sin, but Christ's expiatory-penitential confession of the sins of humanity. McLeod Campbell, who is followed by Moberley, held the theory that the repentance of Christ, or the penitence of Christ, had in it atoning worth, and was the proper expiation of sin (Moberley, 129, 401; *The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought*, p. 875; Clow, 160; Stalker, 135).*

In one word; the object of the death of Christ was the production of a moral impression, the subduement of a revolted world-heart by the exhibition of dying love. This is practically also the Ritschlian view, which, after a re-statement of the old Socinian theory, distrust-removing and confidence re-establishing, effect of the Cross.

Frederick Maurice and Robertson of Brighton (the noblest spirit of them all) may also be refer-

**Crawford states that in his later work, *Forgiveness and Law*, Bushnell somewhat modified his views as set forth in his early work, *Vicarious Sacrifice* (Atonement, p. 526).

*The theory of Christ's repentance is now a very popular one. But however sensitively the Saviour felt the sting and shame and curse of our sin, there is nothing in the Bible to show that this was repentance in any real sense of the word repentance, and it certainly was not the Atonement.

red to as leaders in this the broader school (Crawford, 308, 348). They were followed by such Church writers as Farrer, Moberley, Freemantle, and by Cave, Adeney, Horton, R. J. Campbell, in the Old Country, and in the United States by Lyman Abbot, Washington Gladden, Munger, and a host of others.

When we come to the most daring of the present-day theories with regard to the Atonement, as set forth, for instance, in Sabatier, or the latest work of American modernism, "The Atonement, by Three Chicago Professors of Theology," we are startled with the advance. A very broad space of rationalism intervenes between the broad school of to-day and the broad school of half a century ago. The present-day liberal theology may be traced to two streams of influence:

First.—The influence of German rationalism, pre-eminently the Ritschlian theology, and the critical theories of Wellhausen, Kuenen and their school.

Second.—The widespread acceptance of the theory of evolution.

To the first may be traced the free and easy way of the modernists of dealing with the Scriptures; and to the second, the revolutionized attitude of theologians with regard to sin, its source, its penalty, and its atonement. Albrecht Ritschl, Professor of Theology at Gottingen, whose *Magnus Opus Justification and Reconciliation* was published in 1870, is par excellence, the ruling influence of continental theology.*

What Germany thought yesterday, America and Scotland think to-day, and England will think to-morrow. It is an epigram that has more than a grain of truth in it. The Germanic way of accept-

*Professor Orr's work on the Ritschlian theology is very able. It is written from the evangelical viewpoint. Garvie, on the Ritschlian Theology, writes rather from the viewpoint of one of his school.

ing or rejecting what it pleases of the Bible, and opposing its superior knowledge to the authority of the apostles, is becoming more and more the custom of the leading theologians of the three ruling nations of to-day ; British, American, and German. If a text is inconvenient, modernism disputes it ; if a passage is antagonistic, it dismisses it as Pauline or Petrino, not Christian.

Suppose a Christian of the old days was to enter for the first time the class-room of one of the greatest of modernist professors, addressing a representative body of theologians from Germany, Scotland or the United States ! He would be amazed to hear the rankest Socinianism taught, not only without evoking a suggestion of opposition, much less of horror, but with plaudits from the listening professorate. The question he would propose would not be, "Can God forgive without an atonement?" but, "Is there anything to forgive?" He would state, in the coolest possible manner, without any apparent demur, that Jesus Christ was merely man, not God ; that the supposition of God's displeasure or wrath at sin is an archaic concept : that sin is not guilt as traditional theology conceives, nor does it need any propitiation, and that there is no need of salvation, for there never was a fall. (A God who thinks of poor, hard-worked people as miserable sinners, who must account themselves fortunate to be forgiven for Christ's sake, says R. J. Campbell in the *New Theology*, is no God at all. The theologian may call Him a God of love, but in practice He is spiteful and silly !). The doctrine of evolution has washed out of the Bible the existence of such a man as Adam, and biology has taught that death is not due to sin. He would then probably hear the professor going on to show that nobody nowadays thinks of sin as Paul did ; that it is impossible for the man of to-day, familiarized with the doctrine of evolution and the researches of Biblical scholarship, to think of sin as a debt that is due to God ; that the God of the Bible is, after all, only the God of traditional theology,

the only God of to-day being the imminent God of current pantheism ! In one word, he would hear that what this age not only demands, but requires, is a reconstructed Bible, a re-interpreted Biblical theology, and a presentment of Apostolic conceptions in accordance with the modern mind.

But a theology which begins with accepting or rejecting according to its caprice such sections of the Word of God as it pleases, and substituting its own fancies for the New Testament conceptions of sin, of guilt, of wrath, and death, and the idea of punishment, naturally tends to the climax of repudiating the Deity of our Saviour and the teaching of His inspired apostles ! A Pelagian hamartology invariably leads to a Socinian Christology ; and a Socinian Christology invariably goes hand in hand with a rationalistic Soteriology. If there is no objective Deity, there can be no sin. If man is God, there can be no guilt ; and if there was no fall, and if it is the rise, not the fall, of man with which the study of history makes us acquainted, there is, of course, no need for redemption ; and if there is no need for redemption, there could, of course, be no ransom, or Redeemer, and an Atonement is theologically and philosophically absurd. In one word, if nobody nowadays thinks about sin, as Sir Oliver Lodge says, and if the idea of the wrath of God and the wrath of the Lamb is washed out of the Bible, then there can be no special signification in guilt, and there can be no peril, no danger, no death. If there is no special creation, and man is a mere evolution from some frog or horse or anthropoid, why, of course, there can be no talk of Atonement. If there is no storm and nobody is drowning, why on earth should anyone launch a lifeboat ! If the wages of sin is not death, what evangel is there in the death of Christ for sin and sinners ?

After reading, with every attempt to be sympathetic, the works of the modern theological thought-leaders in Great Britain and the United States, we sadly conclude that modernism is in es-

sence the sophism of which St. Paul speaks in Rom. 1:22, and Col. 2:8. The fact is, the modern mind, in claiming its own supreme rights within its own jurisdiction, will not subject itself to any such external authority as a revealed Law of God. It claims superiority to the word of God, and it particularly resents any interference with its rights on the ground of some theory of inspiration. It will not bow the knee to Peter, or James, or John, or Paul. Nay! not even to the Son of God Himself! (Denney, *The Atonement and Modern Mind* p. 6). It subjects even the Son of God and His inspired Apostles to its disdainful criticisms. Its spirit, as that of Pharaoh of old, is, "Who is the Lord that we should obey His voice?"

The Ritschlianism of 1870 finds its natural climax in the Atonement theories of such men as Munger, Harnack, Sabatier, R. J. Campbell, and the three Chicago professors, E. D. Burton, and J. M. P. and G. B. Smith.

3. The Anglican.

When we turn to the Church of England presentment of this great theory, it is like emerging from a tangled jungle to a fruitful land, or from a dreary Sahara to an oasis of refreshment. It is with no small degree of pride that the Churchman finds that his Church gives no uncertain sound upon this fundamental subject. Over and over again, from the beginning to the end of our invaluable Liturgy, the Atonement is set forth as the central fact of Christianity. Every allusion to it in Collect, and Creed, and Article, and service, and office, is marked at once by doctrinal incorruptness and Scriptural accuracy. As the Prayer Book lies foursquare upon the Bible, so the teaching of the Church of England is most emphatically the teaching of Scripture. If time permitted, we would like to dwell upon the expo-

sition of sin to be found in our Prayer Book. In the sentences, the Confession, the Litany, the Collects, the Communion Service, the other services, pre-eminently the Communion, and more distinctly and theologically in the ninth and twelfth Articles, this great subject is treated in a fashion that should command the reverential study of every loyal son of the Church. It is most timely, for the present-day character ignores sin deplorably. One of the most significant signs of the times is the decadence of its sense of sin. It is a generally admitted fact that the shallowness of our modern theology is owing to this superficial estimate.

The Bible tells us that fools make a mock at sin ; and truly the most foolish fool is that fool who says in his heart, "There is no sin." We thank God, therefore, that no man who stands on the Prayer Book or accepts the teaching of the Church of England can start a heresy from a false estimate of the sinfulness of sin.

In the next place, the Prayer Book exhibits very clearly the fact of the atoning death of Jesus Christ. In the Te Deum, in the three Creeds, in the Litany, in many of the Collects, notably in that of the second Sunday after Easter (where both aspects of the Atonement are epitomized), and in the wealth of Gospel and Epistle for the days before Good Friday, the fact of the atoning death is fully and sufficiently brought forth. There are, however, two sections of our Church's teaching that need to be specially emphasized :

The first is the Holy Communion service ; the second, the Articles.

The Communion service of the Church of England may be said to be the Atonement in epitome. Its supreme end is to bring clearly before the eye of faith the death of Christ as our Substitute, our Sin-Bearer,

our Saviour, our Sacrifice. As it is planted centrally and in the very heart of the Prayer Book, so it has ever had its central place in the Church of Christ because it so clearly sets forth the Atonement. Its order and object is not that of the spurious and artificial order of the Roman and Oriental mass services, but the spiritual presentment of the teaching of the New Testament; for, while the Church of Rome's teaching in contradiction of Hebrews 10:10-14, is that the death of Christ is to be continually re-offered, the Church of England teaches that the death of Christ is to be continually remembered. In every allusion to the Cross of Christ it sets forth the propitiatory, substitutionary, vicarious aspect of the atoning work of our Saviour. His Cross is made the objective ground of the forgiveness of sin. It is only by the merits and death of God's Son, and through faith in His blood, that remission of sins can be obtained. His death was redemptive, and it secured for the believer everlasting life. But above all, the death of Christ was sacrificial. In His death He was the very Paschal Lamb offered for us. His death upon the Cross was the offering of Himself. It was the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. The three words in that single and central sentence finely epitomize the Pauline presentment of the subject.

Modern theologians now insolently declare that we have outgrown these ideas of sacrifice and satisfaction. They call them Jewish parodies, unfit for the modern. They say the dead past and living present cannot agree; that the inheritance of dogma hangs like a millstone about the neck of a great Church like ours.*

*Atonement, by the three Chicago professors, p. 305. The Atonement in Modern Thought, pp. 357-372.

But the Church of England is not ashamed of St. Paul, nor of his Gospel, and while the Church of England stands on that foundation it will never be shaken, and will afford a rock of refuge, firm as the Rock of Ages to which many weary, tempest-driven doubters, may cling with perfect rest.

When we come to the Articles, we find that the truth which is clearly set forth for the Churchman's edification in worship, is equally soundly set forth for his confirmation in doctrine. "The Son of God who was very God, and very Man, truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice" (Article 2). "He came to be the Lamb without spot, Who, by the sacrifice of Himself once made, should take away the sins of the world" (Article 15). "The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone" (Article 31).

Those are splendid words. There is, however, one sentence that the modern mind resents, and that is the words in the 2nd Article, "To reconcile His Father to us." At first sight it does seem as if it contradicts 2 Cor. 5:18, 20, and all those passages which say that we are reconciled to God, and that God has reconciled us to Himself (Rom. 5:10; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20, 21, etc.).

Dean Farrar and other writers use very strong language about this. They say that such may be the language of the Augsburg Helvetic confessions, but that it is not the language of Scripture (Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, p. 36). In words that may be true. The word may not be there, but the thing it denotes is there. It is not words only, but facts and things that

the Article is concerned with. The reconciliation of God cannot be one-sided or partial. It must be complete and mutual. It must be not only a pacifying of sinners towards God, but also a pacifying of God towards sinners (Crawford, p. 179). The real question, after all, is : Is there something in the nature of God which renders it impossible for Him to forgive sin without a satisfaction, or to allay His displeasure or wrath, or whatever you wish to call it, against sin, without a propitiation ? When we get beyond our depth, we must find a footing in Revelation (Rev. 11 : 33). And it is just here that Revelation teaches us. 1 John 2 : 1, and Romans 3 : 25, do teach that there was something in the idea of propitiation which unquestionably produces an effect upon God, as well as an effect upon man. In the light of these texts, the Atonement, looked at from the standpoint of justice, may indeed be described as doing something which may be expressed as propitiating. "The Christian Katallage," says Archbishop Trench (Synonyms, pp. 7, 274), "has two sides. It is first a reconciliation, *qua Deus nos Sibi reconciliavit*" ; i. e., laid aside His holy anger against our sins, as 2 Cor. 5 : 18, 19 ; Rom. 5 : 10. "But," the Archbishop goes on to say, "the Katallage is secondly and subordinated to the reconciliation *qua nos Deo reconciliamur*," etc. It is not to be inferred that this created a different disposition in God. Oh, no ! But it made a different attitude possible ; which is a very different thing. And here is the difference between the Church of England and the superficial theology of modernism. It takes into account all the truth. It looks at truth from all standpoints. The Socinian-Swedenborgian theory fails to take into account the wrath of God. The wrath of God is as real a fact as the love of God. You cannot ignore it, unless you ignore the Bible.

(Heb. 10 : 31, 12 : 29 ; Rev. 6 : 16, 14 : 19, etc.). Any theory, therefore, which fails to take into account the wrath of God, as well as the love of God, must be inadequate. Any theory which ignores one side of truth, or which antagonizes the two complementary sides of truth, is not to be trusted.

In a nutshell, then, the question lies here : Is there such a thing as sin in man ? Is there such a thing as enmity against sin and God ? Is that enmity, displeasure, anger and wrath ? Can that enmity in the God of righteousness be dispensed with without a propitiation, or is expiation indispensable to satisfy God's justice, appease God's wrath, and meet the requirements of His law, as Rom. 5 : 9 ; Eph. 2 : 3 ; I. Thes. 1 : 10 ; Heb. 10 : 26, 27, 30 ; Rev. 6 : 16, 17, teach ? Reason says, No. Revelation says, Yes. And the Church of England stands by Revelation. On the whole, no Anglican need be ashamed of the Church of England presentment of the subject that Christ by His death did change the relationship of God and man, and that our Gospels is an appeal to man to change his relationship to God.

If the language of the two articles may seem to be anthropomorphic, and possibly a 20th century version of the Articles would phrase the words, *ut Patrem nobis reconciliaret*, somewhat differently, the anthropomorphism unquestionably represents a reality and a fact in the disposition of God towards man in his naturally sinful condition, and also sets forth the greatness of the love of God in making the sacrifice of the Body of Christ as the ransom price, and the expiation and the offering for man's sin. The rationale of the Divine action we may never be able to comprehend, much less to explain. But the glory of it is the theme of the redeemed on earth and in heaven.

4. The Practical.

We shall finally consider the Atonement in its actual power to-day. It is said that in music there are notes too lofty and too deep for mortal ear to hear, but the chords which fill the soul with satisfaction must harmonize with these undertones and overtones beyond our ken. There is a height and there is a depth in the atoning love of God that is beyond us; but the discord of life is transmuted into concord with the eternal harmony of heaven by that divine death, which is the victory over the world.

For the marvellous thing about the Atonement is its power to-day. It uplifts to-day; it redeems to-day; it saves to-day. It is not only a victory of history. It is a victory of present-day life. It is a fact, in this 20th century, that the man who looks to Jesus does live. As we glance through the vistas of history, we see it exemplified in a thousand lives. Paul, Augustine, Francis of Assissi, Luther, Latimer, with a myriad million of the sinful, struggling, weary, despondent and sin-sick sons of men, laden with the sin-weight, haunted with the guilt-fear, struggling with the sin-force, tormented with the sin-pain, have found in Him who died in their peace. "The Atonement," said the great scientist, Sir David Brewster, "Oh, it is everything to me! It meets my reason, it satisfies my conscience, it fills my heart." (See also that fine passage in Drummond, *the Ideal Life*, p. 187.)

Or, take our hymns. We want no better theology and no better religion than are set forth in these hymns, says a great theologian (Hodge, *Syst. Theol.*, ii: 591).

The finest exhibition of the practical power of the Atonement is found in those hymns which voice the triumph, and the confidence, and the gratitude, and the loyalty of the soul that cries with Cowper:

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream,
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die."

or sobs with Watts :

"My soul looks back to see
The burdens Thou didst bear
When hanging on the accursed tree,
And knows her guilt was there."

or whispers with that saintly woman, Charlotte Elliott:

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come."

There is no denominationalism in these hymns of the Crucified, for men of Christ of every race and color the world around take up the words of the Anglican, Toplady, and the American Congregationalist, Palmer, and the English Congregationalist, Watts, and the Unitarian, Bowring :

"Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary."

"When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died."

"In the Cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time."

This subject comes home more particularly to the clergy. Our two greatest spheres of power are as preachers and as pastors. The pulpit is the throne of public influence ; the pastorate the throne of personal influence.

It seems to me that no man can have a place of power in the Church ministry to-day who cannot say with fervor, gratitude and humility, "He died for me,"

"He was wounded for my transgressions," "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." This is the witness of the Holy Ghost. No man can go amongst his people, seeking to save and to sanctify, whose religious life is not merely built on traditional ecclesiasticisms, upon religious emotions and psychological experiences. It must be built upon reality as real as life itself; on what the Son of God has done for him. Ah! it is not our love to Him so much as His love to us! It is not our goodness and righteousness so much as His righteousness and goodness! It is not our acceptance of Him, but His acceptance of us. It is not what we have done for Him, but what He has done for us. That is the undersong of humility and gratitude, and the joy of the ransomed life:

"Upon a Life I did not live,
Upon a Death I could not die;
Another's Life, Another's Death,
I stake my whole eternity."

Happy will he be at the end of his career who will be able to say, with one of the greatest of the 19th century preachers, "Looking back upon all the chequered way, I have to say that the only preaching that has done me good is the preaching of a Saviour who bore my sins in His own body on the tree, and the only preaching by which God has enabled me to do good to others in the preaching in which I have held up my Saviour, not as a sublime example, but as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world!"

Yes, that is true. The life of victory, the life of enthusiasm, the life of sympathy, the life of love, all grow out of the perpetuation of the Atonement. The work of Christ did not end with His death upon the Cross. As the Risen and Ascended One, He continues it. The Crucified is still drawing souls to Himself. He is still applying His healing blood to the wounded conscience. We do not preach a Christ who was alive and is dead; we preach the Christ who was dead and is

alive. It is not the extension of the Incarnation merely ; it is the perpetuation of the Crucifixion that is the vital nerve of Christianity.

But orthodoxy must not be dissevered from orthodoxy. McLaren, of Manchester, tells us, in one of his charming volumes, that he once heard of a man who was of a very shady character, but was sound on the Atonement. But what on earth is the good of being sound on the Atonement if the Atonement does not make you sound ? Anyone who reads his New Testament or understands the essence of Apostolic Christianity must understand that a mere theoretic acceptance of the Atonement, unaccompanied by a penetration of the life and character of the principles of Jesus Christ, is of no value whatever. The Atonement is not a mere formula for assent ; it is a life principle for realization. In that we agree with Goldwin Smith. But is it not a fact that, wherever the Atonement is truly received, it generates love to God, and love to man ; evokes a hatred and horror of sin, and offers not only the highest incentive to self-sacrifice, but the most powerful dynamic for the life of righteousness.

" The true morality, Thou Bleeding Lamb,
Is love of Thee ! "

Three brief suggestions, before the last word, especially to my younger brethren :

First.—Read the best, and do not read narrowly. The literature is so large that we must exercise a certain limitation faculty. But, for the man who has not read them, Dale, on the Atonement ; Denney's Death of Christ, and Anselm's Cur Deus Homo, will give sufficient material for months of most edifying reading. A man who wants to do heavier work might read Hodge, Crawford, Moberley, or the fine and scholarly presentments of Van Oosterzee, or Van Dyke, or Clow. And read all round. Do not be sectarian in your reading, or dabble in a little pottering sort of way with only Anglican, or so-called Catholic, writers. Never read only one side. The whole council of God was never tied up in one

Church. Read the greatest works, by whomsoever written. If Hooker said of Rome, "Are we to forsake any true Opinion because idolaters have maintained it?" shall we be so fatuously invertebrate as to read only that we agree with?

Second.—Do not be in too great a hurry to throw overboard the old theologians. While the old saying, "quod est verum non est novum, quod est novum non est verum," has a little too much of the Macaulayesque antithesis about it, it nevertheless represents a truth that is of especial value to Churchmen. We must not be in a hurry to overturn centuries of theology, and we must not fall into the bad habit of calling the older writers by names or attaching a stigma to a time-honored appellation. We must not be scared by the words orthodox or orthodoxy; traditionalism, traditionalist; or be so unwary as to identify traditional theology with something unworthy of modern intelligence. What is old is not necessarily out of date. What is ancient is not necessarily antique.

Third.—Don't be ashamed to stand alone. The popular theology of to-day has a decidedly Unitarian flavor. Men of all ages and ranks are being swept off their feet by the rising tide of crypto-Socinian and crypto-pantheistic theological tendency. Never be ashamed of the old-fashioned doctrine of the Bible and Prayer Book. Trust the good old Bible! Trust the good old Creeds! Trust the good old Prayer Book! Trust the Catholic Christian consciousness of over eight-hundred years. A Christianity that is merely a system of morals, and the best only of natural religions, is not worth preserving. A Christianity without a Christ Divine, an Atonement vicarious, and a Bible inspired, will never carry power. A devitalized Gospel, or diluted Gospel, an attenuated Gospel, will conceive no splendid programme, inspire no splendid effort. It never did produce a martyr, it never will. It never inspired a reformer, and it never will. The two religious poverties of the day, a lost sense of sin,

and a lost sense of God, are simply the result of this attenuated Socinianism that is becoming so prevalent. No minister of Christ has any right to smooth off the corners of the Cross. At the same time, a Christianity that is merely orthodoxy, or an orthodoxy clasped in the dead hand of a moribund Christianity, is one of the greatest of curses. A Church that is only the custodian of the great tradition of the past, and not the expression of a forceful spiritual life; a Christian who is simply conserving a traditional Creed, and not exemplifying the life of the living God, is a cumberer of the ground. A dead Church can never be the exponent of the living God, and a dead Churchman can never be the exponent of a living Church, for the test of every religious, political or educational system, after all, as Amiel says, is the man it forms (Amiel, p. 27).

We would conclude with the words of Anselm: "If we have said anything that ought to be corrected, we do not object to the correction, if it be made with reason. But if what we have said is confirmed by the testimony of the truth, we would attribute this, not to ourselves, but to God." For here now in this life we desire humbly and gratefully to proclaim what one day hereafter we hope in chorus to sing: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Yes! worthy is the Lamb that was slain. He is the Lamb! the Lamb that was slain! Who alone is worthy to receive power, our forces spiritual; and riches, our resources personal; and wisdom, our accomplishments mental; and strength, our energies physical; and honor, our distinction, popular; yea, all our glory, and all our pride, and all our blessing, for every tribute of the devotion of our heart, and of our love, must fall here and hereafter at the feet of the Lamb. For He was slain for us!"

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1912

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LONDON, ONT.